



FIGHTING for PENNSYLVANIA FAMILIES

Children Harmed in Life-Threatening or Dangerous (CHILD) Labor Act of 2023

U.S. Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Patty Murray (D-WA)

Nearly 100 years after child labor laws were established in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938, the United States is seeing a resurgence of exploitative and oppressive child labor. There has been an 88 percent increase in child labor violations since 2019, and children have died or been seriously injured on the job. Unscrupulous employers are exploiting vulnerable children for labor, some of whom are migrants who came to this country without their parents. Many of these children are working in dangerous or hazardous conditions and are struggling with or have dropped out of school. Some of these children are even being taken advantage of by those who are supposed to care for and protect them. Children do not belong in factories or working during hours where they should be studying, spending time with their families, or just simply being children.

To stop this trend, we need stronger laws to protect children and hold companies and individuals across supply chains accountable. Our child labor laws are outdated and are no longer sufficient to prevent child labor or protect children. The CHILD Labor Act would update civil penalties for child labor violations, strengthen the Department of Labor's ability to enforce the FLSA, expand child labor provisions to hold suppliers and subcontractors responsible, and allow children who have been seriously injured to sue their employers.

The Children Harmed in Life-Threatening or Dangerous (CHILD) Labor Act

The CHILD Labor Act of 2023 would provide many needed enhancements to the FLSA and federal contracting laws to combat oppressive child labor practices. Specifically, this bill would:

- Hold liable contractors or subcontractors for child labor violations in the same manner as the employer who employs the oppressive child labor;
- Authorize the Secretary of Labor to label goods that are produced with child labor;
- Authorize the Secretary of Labor to issue a stop work order to any person in violation of child labor provisions;
- Increase the civil penalty amount for persons who violate child labor provisions from \$11,000 to \$151,380 (10x the inflation adjusted amount) for each child who was the subject of such violation. For criminal penalties, this bill would amend the maximum fine from \$10,000 to \$750,000 for any person convicted of child labor violations;
- Require that any person who violates child labor provisions shall be liable to each employee affected by the violation in an amount not less than \$75,000 in compensatory damages;
- Expand child labor requirements to subcontractors and suppliers of a contractor on federal contracts;
- Require federal contracts to contain child labor provisions and prohibit the use of oppressive child labor. This section requires contractors to provide training to any subcontractor or supplier under the contract on child labor provisions;
- Require the Secretary of Labor, to report to Congress on an annual basis, data and recommendations concerning overall trends for work-related injuries, illnesses, or deaths, including trends related to enforcement under Federal or State law with respect to such injuries, illnesses, or deaths.